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"rested on the opinion that Parliament had more work than it could adequately perform. . . . Only two alternative remedies had been suggested. The first was by changes in the rules regulating business in the house; the second was that embodied in the motion under consideration. Many changes in procedure had been made, all with the same object, and they had totally failed to accomplish their purpose."

The result was the appointment of the speaker's conference on devolution; and it is safe to assume that the recognition that the new rules have not made, and that no rules can make, it possible for Parliament to perform its present duties satisfactorily, will go far towards securing favorable consideration for whatever proposals this conference may eventually make.

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Swiss Referendum on the League of Nations. The Swiss referendum of May 16 on the League of Nations was the most important vote of its kind in the history of the republic. All other countries entering the league thus far have done so by parliamentary and executive action, that is, through purely representative means. Switzerland alone referred the question to the direct decision of her electorate. To Americans her action is of interest, not only because of its thoroughly democratic character, but also because we are confronting the same question as the paramount issue of our domestic and foreign politics at the present time.

There can be no doubt that the Swiss people understood thoroughly the fateful nature of the decision they were called upon to make. They witnessed the great war from within its very midst; in spite of their neutrality they suffered and are suffering considerably from its consequences; and they have followed every step taken since the armistice with the deepest interest. A vigorous campaign of education carried on by the press, by political parties, and by propagandist committees of every description preceded the referendum vote itself. With few exceptions the discussion of the issue was conducted upon a high plane. Some vague charges were made of the use of Entente gold to influence the vote, but they were speedily denied and discredited. In spite of the deepest feeling on both sides, personalities were conspicuously absent. A minor point of interest may be found in the active and effective part taken in the campaign by many prominent clergymen, both Protestant and Catholic.

Acceptance of membership in the league was strongly favored by the powerful Independent Democratic (Radical) party, the Liberal Democratic (Protestant Conservative) party, the recently formed anti-bolshevist Peasants' party, the Christian Social party, and the *Grütli*aner. The Catholic Conservatives were divided, some of their most eminent leaders, both lay and clerical, being found in opposing camps. The Socialists who have accepted bolshevist leadership fought the league with all their accustomed arguments and bitterness. Curiously enough, the same attitude was taken by a group of the higher officers of the Swiss army, led by Ulrich Wille, the former general in chief. Party lines were more or less cut across, however, by racial, linguistic, religious and personal prejudices.

A very marked influence upon the referendum was exerted by the federal council, all seven members of which not only favored the league but also campaigned for it vigorously throughout the country. Further, the federal council on May 7, officially issued a powerful appeal to the Swiss people urging them to vote affirmatively. This appeal expressed the deepest conviction that "a decision of the people against the league would bring with it irreparable damage to the prosperity of Switzerland, to the unity of the country, and to the respect which it enjoys abroad. It would involve the gravest danger to our commerce, our industry, and our agriculture. The League of Nations will gradually unite all the states of the world. Already it embraces four-fifths of mankind. The League of Nations aims at the protection of labor; it assures just consideration to the mutual commerce and intercourse of its members; it promotes the development of international law. It opens the way to gradual disarmament and seeks to settle controversies arising between nations by judicial arbitration and peaceful mediation. Above everything else it will hinder or make difficult the beginning of armed conflicts. Switzerland cannot refuse her coöperation when humanity undertakes by a broadly devised plan to bring justice and peace to the world."

To partisans and opponents of the league alike the principle of neutrality, consecrated by the history and imbedded in the constitution of Switzerland itself, was the central point of the whole controversy. The advice of Bruder Klaus: "*Eidgenossen, mischet euch nicht in fremde Händel*"—a Swiss analogue to the counsel given by Washington in his Farewell Address—was resurrected from the fifteenth century and made to do valiant service in advertisements and placards. Although the council of the League of Nations on February 13 of this

year formally guaranteed the military neutrality and inviolability of Switzerland, the enemies of the league protested as unneutral the obligation to take economic measures against possible recalcitrant states, holding this moreover to be a despicable kind of "hunger warfare," certain to lead to military reprisals by the aggrieved state and probably to the invasion of Switzerland and the seizure of Geneva as the capital of the league. The military futility of such action deprived the latter argument of any real force. Regarding neutrality the appeal of the federal council, referred to above, held that: "Entry into the League of Nations in no way diminishes our independence, on the contrary it strengthens it. It involves no denial of our traditional neutral policy of peace; rather will it permit us to pursue that policy in broader ways."

Although not entering largely into public discussion, there was an underlying fear that rejection of the league might cause grave disaffection, perhaps even a secessionist movement, in Romance Switzerland. Opponents of the league made the utmost of the failure of the United States to ratify, but this was discounted as due almost entirely to partisan and anti-Wilson rancor prior to a presidential election. Very little was said openly about German influence, but it seems to have been generally accepted that the Junker and bolshevist elements of Germany desired the Swiss to reject the league, while all the elements supporting the present government of that country favored its acceptance. Certain it is that Dr. Müller, German ambassador to Switzerland, openly expressed the wish to Federal President Motta that "the hopes and efforts of the federal council in favor of the entry of Switzerland into the League of Nations might be realized."

One of the curiosities of the campaign was an argument widely disseminated in certain clerical circles to the effect that Clemenceau, Lloyd George and President Wilson were all notorious free masons, and the league itself a free masonic conspiracy against God, religion and the Pope.

The referendum resulted in a popular vote of 415,819 for to 323,225 against the league. It is estimated that about 76 per cent of the electorate voted, which is a very high, although not the highest, percentage of participation on record. The vote by cantons was not so decisive as the substantial popular majority of 92,594. Eleven and a half cantons were carried for the league, ten and a half against it. A change of ninety-four popular votes in Appenzell Exterior would have tied the state vote and defeated the league. Of the larger cantons Bern, Vaud

and Luzern were for the league; Zürich, St. Gallen and Aargau against it. In Romance Switzerland the popular vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the league, being estimated at 171,000 for to 31,000 against. In German speaking Switzerland the vote stood about 244,000 for to 292,000 against the league.

Deep as were the divisions among the Swiss people on this issue the morrow of the referendum showed them ready to accept the popular verdict without question. Only the future can decide whether their decision was for the weal or the woe of their country. Meanwhile, however, Switzerland enters the league in good faith, people and government alike loyally determined to do all in their power to make it a success. An American may be pardoned the regret that an equally clear-cut popular decision, free from all extraneous considerations, is not possible in his own country.¹

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¹ The writer desires to express his cordial thanks to Mr. S. Meier, editor of the *Amerikanische-Schweizer Zeitung* for a very complete file of Swiss exchanges on this subject.